



Executive Director's Report

MAG's articles of incorporation call for the facilitation of agreements among governmental units and to "attain the greatest degree of intergovernmental cooperation possible in order to prepare for future growth and development." We saw these principles in action at our May meeting.

We first heard a presentation regarding recommended approval of two regionally supported applications for U.S. Department of Transportation TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant funding (*see summary below*). In the past, agencies have submitted projects individually, with limited success. MAG has learned that regionally-supported applications fare better at the federal level.

While MAG believes all of the projects submitted were very worthy projects, in the end two projects—one urban and one rural—were selected for unified regional action. The urban project is for improvements to the Interstate 10/Interstate 17 "Spine" corridor. The Spine is one of our region's most heavily traveled freeway corridors and improvements will create greater mobility and safety, including technology that will help detect wrong-way drivers, which has been a serious safety issue in our region. The rural project also involves a significant safety component, building an overpass on State Route 347. SR-347 is the main north-south corridor for the city of Maricopa, and the current at-grade crossing of the Union Pacific railroad poses a significant safety concern for 34,000 vehicles per day, including emergency vehicles and school buses carrying children. MAG believes regional support for the projects will mean they will have a significantly better chance at being selected for funding.

Another example of the "greatest degree of intergovernmental cooperation" was seen in an agenda item to expand the composition of the Economic Development Committee (EDC). As we have identified challenges to the expansion of our manufacturing base, we have learned there are additional voices that could add value to our efforts. Adding members from the Joint Technical Education Districts, Maricopa Community College District, and the Governor's Office contributes to the EDC's unique niche in the economic development community, bringing an unparalleled wealth of expertise into one forum.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank the Regional Council for supporting the FY 2016 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget. It is through

this support that MAG continues to excel in its work in the region, leading to national recognition as an innovative metropolitan planning organization and enabling MAG to continue providing quality service to Arizona.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.

Meeting Report for Wednesday, May 27, 2015

Action Items



USDOT "TIGER" Grant Funding

The Regional Council voted to approve one urban and one rural transportation project for application for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Round VII discretionary grant funding. The urban project was for the Interstates 10 and Interstate 17 Spine Corridor Improvements, while the rural application is for the City of Maricopa's State Route 347 Overpass.

Staff reported that a total of \$500 million is available nationwide through a multimodal, merit-based, competitive grant program. There is a set-aside of \$100 million for rural areas, which leaves \$400 million dedicated for projects in urban areas. Staff reported that the TIGER grant process is an extremely competitive nationwide process with an emphasis on transformative and innovative projects, noting that the U. S. Department of Transportation is more favorable to regionally supported applications. MAG member agencies were requested to submit project suggestions by April 16, 2015. Applications were reviewed and recommended for approval by the Transportation Review committee and Management Committee prior to being sent to the Regional Council.

The I-10/I-17 Spine Corridor Improvements project features new, technology-based approaches to managing traffic congestion and a commitment to growing the region's transit infrastructure. The Spine Corridor serves as a backbone for the regional freeway system and carries more than 40 percent of the region's daily vehicle trips. Staff reported the corridor would benefit from a TIGER grant by providing greater mobility, increased transit performance and improved safety through a variety of components. These components include an Active Traffic Management strategy to reduce the potential for crashes when speed and conditions change, such as the use of variable speed limits and wrong-way driver detection infrastructure. In addition, construction of a dedicated bus ramp connecting the I-10 median to Van Buren along the southbound I-17 frontage road will provide better access to downtown Phoenix for multiple commuter bus routes. The project will result in travel time savings for transit commuters and reduce congestion in high-occupancy vehicle lanes through downtown Phoenix.

A representative from the city of Maricopa provided information on the rural application. The SR-347 overpass is a greatly needed facility and a TIGER grant would assist in providing much needed safety benefits. Since the City of Maricopa was incorporated in 2003, its population has grown from approximately 1,000 people to more than 46,000. SR-347 is the main north-south corridor for the city and the current at-grade crossing of the Union Pacific railroad poses a significant safety concern. According to 2012 traffic counts, approximately 34,000 vehicles, including school buses carrying nearly 2,900 children, cross the rail line during morning and afternoon peak hour periods. The at-grade crossing also presents problems for emergency vehicles that sit and wait for trains to pass.

Following the Regional Council approval, letters of support for the two projects were sent to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

For more information, please contact Nathan Pryor, MAG Government Relations Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Proposed Revision to the Composition of the MAG Economic Development Committee

The Regional Council approved a recommendation to update the composition of the MAG Economic Development Committee (EDC). Since the inception of the EDC in 2010, the committee has evolved and the composition has been adjusted. The Executive Committee recommended to the Regional Council that the EDC membership be adjusted to include the following: (1) a representative from the Joint Technical Education Districts (JTEDs), who would rotate every two years; (2) a representative from the Maricopa Community College District; (3) a representative from the Governor's Office; and (4) to allow for the seven largest cities (in addition to the City of Phoenix as the central city) to be represented on the EDC. To keep the balance on the EDC, Peoria would be included as one of the seven largest cities and another at-large position would be added in the East Valley.

For more information, please contact Denise McClafferty, Regional Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Approval of the FY 2016 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget and the Member Dues and Assessments

The Regional Council approved a resolution adopting the FY 2016 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget and the Member Dues and Assessments.

Each year, MAG develops a work program and budget, which is presented incrementally beginning in January. Among the updates for the May presentation was the addition of a project involving the Regional Bus Stop ADA Compliance

and Accessibility Study for \$250,000, and the deletion of a project proposed earlier in the year, the US-60/SR-24 Superstition Vistas Transportation Framework Study, for \$300,000. Staff reported that these changes do not affect the overall budgeted amount for FY 2016. Staff noted that the proposed FY 2016 budget of \$32,265,301 reflects a 1.08 percent decrease from the FY 2015 budget, including carryforward project estimates.

MAG submits its Work Program each year to the Government Finance Officer's Association for the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. MAG received this award for the 16th consecutive year for the FY 2015 Work Program; the approved work program for FY 2016 will be submitted for the 17th consecutive year.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Meeting

Please note that the next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be held at a different location. The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be the Annual Meeting on **Wednesday, June 24, 2015, at 11:30 a.m. at the Phoenix Airport Marriott, 1101 North 44th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85008**. Parking is free and vouchers for purchased transit tickets will be provided. The annual meeting will be followed by the Passing of the Gavel Ceremony. Those planning to attend the ceremony are asked to RSVP through the e-mailed Eventbrite invitation **by June 12, 2015**. The agenda is expected to include election of officers. Additional agenda items are pending.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.